

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1185

By Bone

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to investigate the potential of encouraging locally grown foods, particularly locally grown organic foods, and supporting farming located close to population centers in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the citizens of the State of Tennessee are entitled to quality food at a reasonable price; and

WHEREAS, the costs of food production and transportation are tied to the price of oil and natural gas, which continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, the estimated average mileage that food travels before it reaches the consumer's table is estimated by the Leopold Center at Iowa State University to exceed one thousand five hundred (1500) miles; and

WHEREAS, tainted food has recently caused serious illness; sourcing food locally increases the speed and accuracy of determining the source of the tainted product; and

WHEREAS, in the case of natural or other disasters where supply lines of food are disrupted, having well established local food distribution patterns would likely increase the secure access to food for local communities; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the State of Tennessee that the General Assembly promote the economic viability of Tennessee's farms and farm families; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the State of Tennessee that the General Assembly promote the increased per capita income of Tennessee farmers and farm families in general, and tobacco farmers in particular as they review their options for the potential transition out of the declining tobacco industry; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the State of Tennessee that the General Assembly promote incentives for job creation and attract economic investments in the State that are related to Tennessee's farmers and farm families; and

WHEREAS, there are other states, counties, and universities that have studied the impact of locally produced foods, especially locally produced organic foods, on their local and regional economies and determined the positive impact of locally grown food, and especially locally grown organic food, on the economy of the entity studied; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned studies have revealed that the benefits of increased organic farming result in both measurable and un-measurable impacts on the economy of the entities studied, including the findings by the Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia that: "Retail price premiums for organic foods average 10% to 30% higher than conventional. Farm price premiums are 70% to 250% more than what conventional farmers receive."; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that there is hereby created a special joint committee to investigate the potential positive impact of increasing the production of locally grown foods, especially locally grown organic foods, on the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this special joint committee shall be known as the Tennessee Locally Grown and Organic Farming Impact Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tennessee Locally Grown and Organic Farming Impact Task Force shall consist of the members of the House Agriculture Committee and the Senate Commerce, Labor and Agriculture Committee, and one (1) member from each of the following representatives of the Tennessee farming community for a total non-legislative membership of five (5):

- (1) Tennessee Farm Bureau;
- (2) Tennessee Department of Agriculture;
- (3) Appalachian Sustainable Development Project;
- (4) Clinch Appalachian Farm Enterprises Farm-to-School Growers Association; and

(5) Tennessee Organic Growers Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tennessee Locally Grown and Organic Farming Impact Task Force shall be charged with the responsibility of, but not limited to, the goals listed below:

- (1) Broadening the retail consumer's choice for healthy local foods in their local grocery or market;
- (2) Determining the potential positive financial impact for tobacco growers and other farmers of locally grown foods, especially locally grown organic foods; and
- (3) Determining the potential economic benefits for historically tobacco dependent communities and other economically disadvantaged rural communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tennessee Locally Grown and Organic Farming Impact Task Force shall develop its data using, but not limited to:

- (1) University studies, including the *Benefits of U.S. Organic Agriculture*, Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia;
- (2) Existing locally grown food, and especially locally grown organic food, production including the:
 - (A) Appalachian Sustainable Development Project;
 - (B) Farm to School Program of Jubilee Project;
 - (C) Clinch Appalachian Farm Enterprises; and
 - (D) Woodbury County, Iowa model.
- (3) United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) studies, including a soon to be published study of local food system infrastructure by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service;
- (4) Studies from the USDA Research Station in Beltsville, Maryland and the Rodale Institute in Pennsylvania regarding organic production systems and their impacts on yield, drought resilience, and carbon sequestration; and
- (5) Studies from the National Farm to School Network of the Community Food Security Coalition reporting on the actual experiences of the increased production of local produce for local schools in thirty-seven (37) states.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. Non-legislative members shall serve without compensation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect from among its legislative membership a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special joint committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Governor, the respective Chairs of the House Agriculture Committee and the Senate Commerce, Labor and Agriculture Committee, and to the One Hundred Sixth General Assembly no later than February 1, 2009, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.